

TRUXTON KING

A Story of
...Growth

By GEORGE BARR
M'UTCHEON

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CHAPTER XVII.

TRUXTON EXACTS A PROMISE.
TRUXTON KING had been in a resentful frame of mind for nearly forty-eight hours. In the first place, he had not had so much as a single glimpse of the girl he now worshipped with all his heart. In the second place, he had increased, with unpleasant promptness, after Count Vos Engo was the officer in command of the house guard, a position as gravely responsible as it was honorable.

He had, of course, proffered his services to Colonel Quinnox. The colonel, who admired the Americans, gravely informed him that there was no regular duty to which he could be assigned, but that he would expect him to hold himself ready for any emergency. In case of an assault he was to report to Count Vos Engo.

But he was not satisfied. Loraine had not come forward with a word of greeting or relief—in fact, she had not appeared outside the castle doors.

Toward dusk on Monday, long after the arrival of the refugees, he sat in gloomy contemplation of his own unpopularity, darkly glowering upon the friendly portals from a distant stone bench.

A brisk guardsman separated himself from the knot of men at the castle doors and crossed the piazza toward him.

Judge the dismay and anger when the soldier, a bit shamefaced himself, briefly announced that Count Vos Engo had issued an order against loitering in close proximity to the castle.

Truxton's cheek burned. He saw in an instant that the order was meant for him and for no one else, he being the only outsider likely to come under the head of "loiterer."

Truxton turned to him with a frank smile. "Please tell Count Vos Engo that I am the last person in the world to disregard discipline at a time like this."

His glance swept the balcony, suddenly becoming fixed on a couple near the third column. Count Vos Engo and Loraine Tullis were standing there together, unmistakably watching his humiliating departure.

The next morning he encountered Vos Engo near the grove.

Catching sight of Vos Engo, he hastened across the avenue and caught up to him.

"Good morning," said Truxton. Vos Engo did not smile as he eyed the tall American. "I haven't had a chance to thank you for coming back for me last Saturday. Allow me to say that it was a very brave thing to do."

"I do not like your words, Mr. King, nor the way in which you glare at me."

"I'm making it easier to tell you the agreeable news, Count Vos Engo; that's all. Take your hand off your sword, please—some other time perhaps, but not in these days, when we need men, not cripples. I'll tell you what I have discovered, and then we'll drop the matter until some other time. Frankly, count, I have made the gratifying discovery that you are a miserable cur."

Count Vos Engo went very white.

"As you say, there is another and a better time. We need dogs as well as men in these days."

Truxton strolled off to the stables, picking up Mr. Hobbs on the way.

"Hobbs," he said, "we've got to find John Tullis; that's all there is to it."

"I dare say, sir," said Mr. Hobbs, with sprightly decisiveness. "He's very much needed."

"I'm going to need him before long, sir, by second."

Later on much of Truxton's good humor was restored and his vanity pleased by a polite request from Count Halbert to attend an important council in the "room of wrangles" that evening at 8.

Very boldly he advanced upon the castle a few minutes before the appointed hour.

He came upon Loraine Tullis at the edge of the terrace. She was walking slowly in the soft shadows beyond the row of lights on the lower gallery. He knew her at a glance, this slim girl in spotless white.

"Loraine!" he whispered, reaching her side in two bounds. She put out her hands, and he clasped them. Plainly she was confused. "I've been dying for a glimpse of you. Do you think you've treated me?"

"Don't, Truxton!" she pleaded, suddenly serious. "You must not come here. I saw—well, you know. I was so ashamed; I was so sorry."

He still held her hands.

"Yes; they ordered me to move on, as if I were a common loafer," he said, with a soft chuckle. "But where have you kept yourself?"

"I have been ill, Truxton—truly, I have," she said quickly, uneasily.

"You told Vos Engo to ride back and pick me up," he persisted. "He told me in so many words. Now, I want a

plain answer, Loraine. Did you promise to reward him if he—well, if he saved me from the mob?"

"No," she said in a low voice.

"What was it, then? I must know, Loraine."

"I am very, oh, so very unhappy, Truxton," she murmured.

"I came near spoiling everything just now," he whispered hoarsely.

"What?"

"I almost kissed you, Loraine. I swear it was hard to keep from it. That would have spoiled everything."

"Yes, it would," she agreed quickly.

"I'm not going to kiss you until you have told me you love Vos Engo."

"I—I don't understand!" she cried, drawing back and looking up into his face with bewildered eyes.

"Because then I'll be sure that you love me."

"Be sensible, Truxton."

"I'll know that you promised to love him if he'd save me. It's as clear as day to me. You did tell him you'd marry him if he got me to a place of safety."

"No. I refused to marry him if he did not save you. Oh, Truxton, I am so miserable! What is to become of all of us? What is to become of John and Bobby and you?"

"I—I think I'll kiss you now, Loraine," he whispered almost tremulously. "God, how I love you, little darling! You must make me a promise."

"Oh, Truxton, don't ask me to say that I'll be your— She stopped, painfully embarrassed.

"That will come later," he said consolingly. "I want you to promise, on your sacred word of honor, that you'll kiss no man until you've kissed me."

"Oh," she murmured, "I—I cannot promise that! I am not sure that I'll ever—ever kiss anybody. What is it you really want me to say?" she asked, looking up with sudden shyness in her starry eyes.

"That you love me—and me only, Loraine," he whispered.

(To Be Continued.)

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\$150 AN ACRE—270 acres, foothill land, about 6 miles from Medford; there are about 85 acres on this place now planted to fruit, which includes about 26 acres in bearing. The bearing varieties are Newtown and Spitzenberg apples and Comice pears. There are 25 acres of Newtowns in their second year with peach fillers and about 6 acres of Newtowns just planted; also 20 acres of Jonathans and 10 acres of Bartlett and Anjou pears just planted. About 200 acres of first-class fruit land on the place. There are many springs on the place and considerable water could be developed for irrigation; two houses, good barn and other buildings. Would subdivide nicely. Easy terms.

\$2500—Sixty acres, 6 miles from Medford, about 15 acres cleared and partly planted; small buildings.

\$250 AN ACRE—70 acres, about 4 miles from Medford, free soil; 25 acres planted to Newtown and Spitzenberg apples, mostly 3 years old; in addition, about 25 acres under cultivation, balance easily cleared; good new 6-room plastered house, new barn; also set of old buildings. Could be subdivided into two or three tracts nicely. easy terms.

\$5500—Six miles from Medford, good new buildings, about 8 acres planted to Newtowns, Spitzenbergs and pears, 1 and 2 years old; about 7 acres additional cleared, balance not hard clearing; good team, wagon and machinery goes with the place. This is a 40-acre tract.

\$15,000—This price holds till April 1/only; 47 1/2 acres, close to Central Point, good new buildings, level land, all first-class fruit and alfalfa land. This tract has about 7 acres in alfalfa and the balance is all planted as follows: Eight acres Comice in fourth season, 2 acres Newtowns in third season, 5 acres Bartletts in third season, 3 acres Winter Nalis in third season, 9 acres Newtowns and 1 acre Spitz in second season, 6 acres Bartletts in second season, balance just planted. The price quoted is but a trifle more than \$300 an acre, which is very much less than owners are asking for adjoining land.

\$12,525—Eleven acres in Comice pears, 10 years old; 9 acres in Bartlett and Anjou pears, 1 to 3 years old; close in; good soil; terms.

\$12,000—Eleven acres in Comice and Bose pears, 14 years old; these trees are in full bearing and will pay a good income on the price asked.

\$7000—Thirty-five acres of black sticky, 3 miles from Medford, all under the ditch and can be irrigated.

\$13,000—Thirty-two acres, close to Medford, 8 acres in Newtowns and Spitzenbergs, 5 to 7 years of age; 14 acres in alfalfa, 3 acres in peaches, 2 acres in berries; irrigated; buildings.

\$14,000—Thirty-five acres; buildings; exceptionally fine place for a home; 12 acres in apples and pears 3 years old; about an acre of bearing orchard; 11 acres in alfalfa; all fine deep free soil.

\$150 to \$200 PER ACRE—Stewart acre tracts; 2 miles from Medford; tracts are from 10 to 25 acres in size; fine building spots on all; can all be irrigated; cheapest tracts in Medford neighborhood; easy terms.

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V—11.95 acres, all set to fruit, right varieties, in age from 1 to 20 years. Price \$15,000.
W—11.60 acres, all in fruit; 574 Newtowns 4 years old, 175 Bose pears 4 years old, 80 Bartlett pears 4 years old. Price \$8400.
3—Fine lot, 50x175 feet, two blocks from Oakdale pavement; lot lies high; 14 bearing apple trees. Price for short time, \$450.
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